

media release

SA Metropolitan Fire Service



SA firefighter's Tour of Duty in America

Friday, 6 August 2010

A South Australian firefighter is about to embark on a remarkable journey with Australian and American colleagues to honour peers who perished in the September 11 attacks in 2001.

Metropolitan Fire Service (MFS) firefighter Michael Tagell is the only South Australian among 16 Australian firefighters who'll take part in the ***Tour of Duty*** run from LA to New York.

The *Tour of Duty* run will see American firefighters and emergency service workers and Australian firefighters relay running across America during the heat of summer.

They'll start in LA on 12 August, finishing their journey in New York when they cross the Brooklyn Bridge to Ground Zero on September 11, 2010.

Station Officer Michael Tagell said when he was asked to be involved in the run, he saw it as an opportunity to send a message of hope.

"One message that we will all have in mind during our journey is that it is our duty to remember what happened on September 11 and reinforce all that is good about humanity.

"We are running to remember the firefighters and emergency service workers who headed into a disaster scene that most civilians were instinctively and understandably trying to leave," he said.

During the run, participants will raise funds for American and Australian charities. Station Officer Tagell will raise funds for the Australian Professional Firefighters Foundation (APFF) in South Australia.

This Sunday, 8 August, all 16 Australian firefighters taking part in the *Tour of Duty* will complete **Sydney's City to Surf** run before leaving Australia on Monday, 9 August.

MFS Acting Chief Officer, Mick Smith said the MFS is proud of Station Officer Tagell's commitment to what will be a difficult but rewarding journey.

"Station Officer Tagell already has a strong discipline for fitness and long distance running. But this *Tour of Duty* will have a special meaning of hope, not just for the runners involved but the communities they run through and people who hear of their expedition," Acting Chief Officer Smith said.

The *Tour of Duty* run has attracted high profile supporters such as Australian Actor Hugh Jackman and former Tennis Champion Pat Rafter. Comedian Jerry Lewis is the American Patron of the run, while former Prime Minister John Howard is the Australian Patron.

The *Tour of Duty* run is the brainchild of Melbourne (MFB) firefighter Paul Ritchie.

For more information about the *Tour of Duty*, visit: www.tourofduy.com.au

For media enquiries please telephone the MFS Media Line on (08) 8204 3770

www.mfs.sa.gov.au